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SUBJECT: COUNTER-TERRORISM COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIP -
RECRUITING ITALY

REF: USUN 1974

11. Action request, para 5.

12. For the past two years Danish Permanent Representative, Ellen Loj has energetically chaired the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), a subsidiary body of the Security Council. When Denmark's term as a non-permanent member of the Council ends on December 31, she will vacate the CTC chair. New members of the Council will include Belgium, Italy, South Africa, Guatemala or Venezuela and Indonesia. Some of these are not well suited to assume the leadership of the Committee, either for political reasons or because their UN Mission lacks the capacity to assume the extra burden of steering the Committee's work.

13. The European candidates elected on October 16 are Belgium and Italy. Both have been preparing to join the Council on January 1 and have terrorism experts on their staffs ready to take on their CT portfolios. When the subject of chairing the Committee has been broached, however, neither delegation has shown much enthusiasm for assuming the task but neither has said no.

14. Italy is probably the best prospect from a U.S. perspective. A G-8 member and strong U.S. ally in combating terrorism, they share our views and have cooperated closely with the U.S. at the UN on CT issues. Their Mission is well staffed, professional and respected. The Belgium Mission, although headed by a strong and impressive Permanent Representative, has not been actively involved on CT issues in the past. CTED chairman, Ambassador Ruperez gave his assessment to us October 12 (Reftel) and shared our view that Italy would prove a strong effective chair. Comment: It has been the custom of the P5 to propose Chairmen for the CTC, Sanctions Committees and other SC subcommittees. Previously, the CTC has been chaired by the U.K., Russia and Spain. Informally, the Russian, French and U.K. Missions have indicated that they would support an Italian Chairmanship. Chinese and French views are not yet known. End Comment.

15. Action Request: USUN recommends that the Dept ask Embassy Rome to press the Italians to give serious consideration to serving as Chairman of the CTC. Although the Italian Mission has not expressed enthusiasm for chairing the Committee, we believe that a bilateral approach at a high level underscoring the CTC's importance, the qualifications the Italians bring, and the significance we attach to Italy's chairing this important Committee could lead the Mission here to reconsider.

BOLTON